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DECEMBER 13, 2024 | VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 26

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A season of peace. **page 3**



MEET YOUR
VENDOR:
**ROBERTO ISLA
CABALLERO**
PAGE 3

GROUND COVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!**

Pictured left to right: Roberto, Luiza, Michael, Steve, Ken, Felicia, Cindy, Mike, Shelley, Lonnie.

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM



@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

Hear me out: This holiday season, forgive

ANTHONY SMITH
Groundcover contributor

I'll be home for Christmas ... if only in my dreams. 'Tis the season and I'm feeling bad. I miss my family and I want to be home. Don't get me wrong, sleeping on the sidewalk is cool but it's nowhere near as good as spending time with the ones you love. This time of year is tough for many people, I know. I'm not the only one who has ever hurt at Christmastime. I'd take all the holiday weirdness and bear it stoically for everyone if I could, and I might spare a gentler soul the hurt I've known. If I could give my readers one piece of advice it would be this: FORGIVE.

Say you are sorry even if you know you aren't wrong. It's okay to eat crow now and again if it means you can mend relationships with your family or whomever you love. Being right is not near as good as being loved! I wish I could take my own advice but I don't think it would help my

situation. I don't have a big family so there are only a few people I would want to be with anyway.

I'll probably spend the day alone; maybe I'll have a few drinks and if the nog hits me right, who knows? If I had a wish that I could make for Christmas magic it would be a chance to spend Christmas like I did four years ago.

I'd kept the flame burning with a beach bunny, Jessica, from Daytona that I'd met in college. My mom had cancer and I was worried I might never see her again. Jessica came up from DC and we tried to see my mom. I almost had it, the two most important people to me in one place! We couldn't find her so we drove all through Frankenmuth and Bronner's. Jessica is a southern girl so she didn't do snow very well. I had to teach her a few things so we would not wreck. It wasn't a traditional Christmas I guess. Even so, I had one of the best Christmases and I almost nailed it. Now, four years later, I only wish I could have that nearly perfect day again. The

important thing is that you take the love within you and share it with the ones you love the most. But I digress.

If I can give you one piece of advice, it's this, FORGIVE! Forgive and forgive some more. Say that you are sorry or whatever you must and mend those relationships; sometimes people will surprise you and will be overwhelmed by your largesse. This year fools are advising people to cut off family members for stuff like politics. This is so dumb! Forgive, forgive — and just to be sure, forgive some more. Saying sorry for some things even if you may not actually have done anything wrong can sometimes work wonders. Pass this advice on: FORGIVE AND POTENTIALLY BE FORGIVEN.

A friend or someone you know needs to hear this. There is someone, somewhere who should humble themselves and say "I'm sorry." I might not get to spend Christmas with my family, but if my advice trickles down to the one that needs it the most then I've done my bit. Keep holy this time of year and

spread this idea. Because as they say, "to err is human, to FORGIVE is divine" and this is what the best holiday is all about. For a brief time a great man walked the earth and because his blood was shed we can all have hope to save our souls in this the best of all possible worlds.

If you want to get me anything this year for Christmas, spread this simple idea. They may deserve lumps of coal, but you will give them love and the light that shines from behind your eyes will kill them with kindness and those who may have doubted you will possibly question their doubting. I know you can do it! Spread forgiveness and have patience with those who are difficult because we are not guaranteed tomorrow and today might be as good as it gets.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, I LOVE YOU ALL. Scan the QR code to listen to my favorite Christmas song. :)



GROUNDCOVER NEWS

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for \$2, keeping all income and tips from each sale.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

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full page	\$650.00	\$900.00	10.25 X 13

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PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

MEET YOUR VENDOR



Roberto Isla Caballero,
vendor No. 347

In one sentence, who are you?
I am a worker.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover? The corner of Main and Washington Streets.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover? 2016 – because people from the Breakfast Church asked what I was doing, and I said “nothing.” And then they asked if I wanted to sell.

What is your favorite thing to do in Ann Arbor? Sell my papers.

If you could do anything for a day, what would it be? My work.

If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be? Drink my water.

What was your first job? Helping my family in Cuba.

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County? Nothing.

What is your superpower? Groundcover News.

What's the best way to start the day? Selling Groundcover.

What is your pet peeve? When people take my things.

What small thing makes your day better? Coming to the office.

What song do you have completely memorized? Pitbull.

What would be the first thing you'd do if you won the lottery? I don't play games.

A season of peace

Every year at Christmas time we hear refrains of “Peace on Earth.” There is some sense in our sub-conscious that peace is a natural state that we have lost. Is the Garden of Eden totally a myth or was there something before written history that was more cooperative and less warlike than what we call civilization? One important resource for my understanding is the work of Ernest Becker, particularly “The Denial of Death.” I just learned that his “Escape From Evil” is highly recommended so it is now on my reading list.

Inequality first arose as those "fearless in battle," be it with lions or human invaders, gained prestige and power in the community. Those who overcame their fear of death were idolized by many who believed in their heroes more than in themselves. Something like “let someone else take the risk and we will give them our power.” As you cede your power to others, a chain of command can arise that is at odds with natural law but



KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

continues due to a mastery of violence and a willingness to perfect and use violence, as if it is just another tool. There can even be great celebration for the “spoils of war!” As the money pours in, all the glories of victory may vindicate a feeling of superiority for the victors. This is the beginning of a class-based society, what we naively call “civilization.”

Supremacism may appeal to some as if it is natural law but it fails the unity of opposites test. Self and other are not permanent states and death is the ultimate

test. Letting go of an illusory self is our job and will prompt a smile as we say goodbye to this world and enter the mystery of beyond.

If you look at the first writings of homo sapiens, you will see how the oral tradition spoke of a more natural society than what grew out of violence and male supremacy. Look at “Tales from the Mabinogion.” The story of the Welsh language, as the bards of old were written down, spans the 6th to 13th centuries. This literature which grew from the oral tradition is still an inspiration to many who sense the creative authenticity of our ancestors.

As deep as our genes is a culture of the mind that we can cultivate. When the student is ready the teacher will appear. Reality is here and you are in a game of cosmic tag. This is the season when we sing “Joy To The World.” Practice the breath of peace until it is natural.

It's December

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover vendor No. 56

It's December
cool, crisp, fresh air

Bring some Kleenex for your nose and eyes

It's December,
and sometimes
these need a wiping!

It's December
sunlit snow dunes
as if to be reflectors
of December



To la vírgen

ROBERTO ISLA CABALLERO
Groundcover vendor No. 347

De los dos solo hay una. Es nuestra madre María. De una flor salió un indígena y con su manto índio solo miró los pies de nuestros días y con su manto dorado solo miró unas estrellas doradas y un padre y un pio a un cardenal. Hijos santos, madre mía.

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The goodies and pretties of Christmas



DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

fruits are plums and grapes.

I also love getting together with friends and family at Christmas. Friends are equal to family I think. I think if you love and enjoy being with anyone, they are considered part of your family.

I like doing artwork and decorating for Christmas. I decorate my home with Christmas decorations all year round, just like they do in Frankenmuth. Frankenmuth is a place I always love to go, no matter what time of year it is. I dream of going there again sometime when I can get a ride there. I love to make my home as close to my dream of Frankenmuth as I can.

Christmas has some beautiful songs — some of my favorite songs are “Joy To The World,” “Silver Bells” and “Oh Come, All Ye Faithful.” I like “Santa Baby,” too. I love watching Christmas cartoons like “A Charlie Brown Christmas.” One of my favorite parts is when Charlie finds a little tree that nobody wants, and they all make it a beautiful tree. Also when they sing, “Home Alone” is another good movie; I like both “Home Alone” I and II. Christmas is a time to enjoy yourself and enjoy your time with others. Merry Christmas!

I love candy at Christmas, too. Candy canes and peppermint patties are good because they help my sinuses and colds. I also love chocolate covered cherries and hard candies. I love those taffy peppermints, too. My favorite

Please help this Christmas

TABITHA ALMOND
Groundcover vendor No. 360

Hello all Groundcover readers! I am in need of Christmas help this year. All of the Christmas helping programs application deadlines have already passed. I did not know that I would have to complete the application form for Christmas helping programs so early. Now I am in desperate need of help to make sure my children will be able to wake up Christmas morning with some gifts from Santa.

There is a couple ways you could help, if you're able. The first one is Venmo — scan the QR code and put “Merry Christmas” on it. Another way is gift cards — Meijer, Target, Visa or Amazon gift cards sent to mine and my husband's email tabbysean99@gmail.com, but please in the subject line put MERRY CHRISTMAS so I know it is not a scam email just wanting me to click on something. Or, if you would like to help my family out in some other way, you could



Almond family: Sean, Tabitha, Crystal (3) and Lena (1).

also email me or my husband at the email address with how you would be able to help and one of us would email you back. My family and I really appreciate whatever help you can give. Thank you in advance, and happy holidays to everyone!



WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION DAY TIME WARMING SHELTER LOCATIONS:



Location	Address	Dates Available
Ypsilanti Freighthouse (Mon.- Thur., 8am-6pm)	100 Market Place Ypsilanti, MI 48198	Nov. 13, 2024 - March 31, 2025
Delonis Center (Weekends only)	312 W. Huron St. Ann Arbor, MI 48103	Nov. 11, 2024 - April 13, 2025
Luther House ED Building	1510 Hill St., Ann Arbor 48104	Nov. 19, 2024 - Dec. 6, 2024
First Baptist Church	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Dec. 9, 2024 - Jan. 3, 2025
St. Mary's Student Parish	331 Thompson St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Jan. 6, 2025 - Jan. 31, 2025
First Congregational Church	608 E. Williams St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Feb. 3, 2025 - Feb. 14, 2025
First Baptist Church	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor, MI 48104	Feb. 17, 2025 - March 14, 2025
Ann Arbor Day Site	TBD	March 17, 2025 - April 11, 2025

All Washtenaw County office building lobbies are available as warming center sites during normal business hours.

Unless otherwise specified, all above warming shelters operate Monday through Friday during normal business hours. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Delonis Center at 734-662-2829. For updates, visit bit.ly/washtenaw-warming.

Last updated: 11/15/24



For updates and more information:
bit.ly/washtenaw-warming



OVERNIGHT SHELTER INFORMATION

Winter shelter information: Winter daytime and overnight shelter accommodations are available throughout the winter shelter season from **November 11, 2024 - April 13, 2025** for any individual seeking emergency shelter during the cold winter months.

- Daytime shelter** - Monday - Thursday, 8am - 6pm at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (100 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
- Overnight shelter** - Nighttime accommodations are at the Delonis Center; 312 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor, and at offsite locations including Congregation partners throughout the County, and there is an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. During day-time hours, those seeking overnight shelter should first contact HAWC to obtain a referral for shelter at 734-961-1999. If it is after 5pm or weekend, please come to the Delonis Center or call the Delonis Center at 734-662-2829 and we'll assist with ensuring you're served and provide transportation to an offsite location if needed.

How do I get into the shelter?

Any individuals seeking emergency shelter please contact Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) at 734-961-1999 to obtain a referral to the Delonis Center. If it is after 5pm or weekend, please come to the Delonis Center and we'll assist ensuring you're served. Families, please come to or call Alpha House for assistance anytime at 734-822-0220.

What is provided at the shelter?

Individuals are provided a safe place to sleep each night and can access a wide variety of services including meals, case management, medical care, and most importantly help finding permanent housing.

Ypsilanti considers Care-Based Safety

On Tuesday November 26 at the Ypsilanti City Council meeting, two people, Liz Kennedy and Corn Williams, gave a presentation about a community program called Care-Based Safety. According to the CBS website, “Care-Based Safety is dedicated to acting with principle and intention. We are taking careful steps in building a community response program that brings loving, unarmed support to people directly impacted by structural violence – without police. In our planning, response, and practice we center the needs of people who are Black, Indigenous, undocumented, unhoused, LGBTQIA+, using drugs and/or experiencing mental health struggles.”

Liz, 29, shared how she got involved. “I’m a survivor of domestic and interpersonal violence and have had traumatizing experiences with the police. I got involved in CBS when I realized that I would have to learn some tools if I wanted to keep myself and my loved ones safe during a crisis.”

As CBS began its pilot program in the summer of 2023, a group of people began sleeping under the awning of an abandoned bank building at 16 S. Washington. During that summer, CBS (as well as Fed Up Ministries and Growing Hope) had become associated with what the city called “an increased public safety risk in the downtown core.”

Liz commented, “The area was already a safety risk. It’s why we came there in the first place. The city was looking the other way until we showed up. They tried to make us a scapegoat.”

Liz recalled, “... This summer [2024] looked really different. Our presence made a big impact. Fed Up keeps an incident log. Anecdotally, this year we cut the number of incidents in half. When we wrapped up in September there was a noticeable uptick in 911 calls. This is how opponents justified saying there was a public safety risk. Realistically, the uptick is proof of concept for CBS’s pilot.”

They also noticed something new in the summer of 2024. Liz continued, “We had a lot of returning folks but every shift there was a new person. I think people are missing the fact that the housing crisis is generating new homelessness (sic) victims constantly. That gave the impression that there was more disruption from the regulars than there actually was. We were helping so many people that no one noticed they were all new. The new people are unseen and the whole area is considered a safety risk when really it is a refugee camp.”

Corn, 38, has lived experience of homelessness. Corn explains his



JIM CLARK
Groundcover vendor No. 139

involvement. “I was into doing my own community work when I was approached by a member of CBS. She told me about some folks who had backgrounds in crisis response and de-escalation that were trying to bring this vision (CBS) to life. When some funding came in to hire employees they tapped me to apply so now I do advocacy for Care-Based Safety.”

Corn shared during the presentation: “CBS would provide the city extreme cost savings by reducing the workload of the [Ypsilanti Police Department]. The largest part of the police budget is their operational costs. Even something as slight as a 15% reduction in operational demands would result in a \$750,000 decrease in costs. On top of that, the reduction on gas, dispatch and other secondary expenses would add up to nearly a million dollars.

“As part of my advocacy work, I attended the Ypsilanti Police Advisory committee meetings. Disgruntled police would come to the meeting and share how detrimental working at YPD was to their mental health. Constant exposure to traumatic incidents plus being overworked and over capacity made a serious impact on their mental health. Here I was, worried that a cop with a clean bill of mental health was gonna whoop my ass or shoot me! But instead YPD is overworking these guys and arming them, knowing they potentially have a diagnosis and throwing them into danger night after night. To me that represents a huge danger to the public.”

I asked Council Member Patrick McLean what he thought of the CBS presentation.

“I’m open to working with them and

the concept of an alternative response. I want to hear that they have formal training,” he shared, “They gave a long list of things they do and don’t respond to, but I’m curious about how people get triaged. That is, when they receive a phone call how can they ensure they are determining the proper response?”

In response to those questions, I asked Liz, “What would you do if you got to a situation and found out there was a gun or a fire?”

“We would call 911 and escalate other emergency responders. We have relationships with the ambulance and fire department.”

“Do you see a day when CBS could be called to put out a fire?”

Corn laughed as he inserted: “We would need a sizable grant for a fire truck.”

“What if it was a bucket brigade?” I countered.

Liz chimed in, “I’m glad you brought that up. Modern paramedics came out of Black communities in Pittsburgh because of segregated medical care.”

From the Team Rubicon USA website: “Founded in 1967, the Freedom House Ambulance Service was created largely to serve the predominantly Black community of Pittsburgh’s Hill District.”

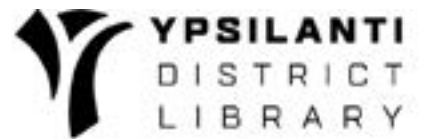
I asked Liz, “If the city were to pass a resolution to adopt Care-Based Safety, what would it say?”

She replied, “We would like Ypsilanti to provide a memo of understanding that establishes a committed partnership between the city and Care-Based Safety. Also funding, obviously, and to reintroduce the RFP that Council member Dez Simmons put forth last year.”

Corn concluded, “Mental health and public safety services are paid for through county millages. Last year, they told us they were going to immediately allocate millage funding for mental health programs. We want the county to follow through with this and we want that mental health program to be Care-Based Safety.”



Care-Based Safety would reduce police expenditures and save the City of Ypsilanti thousands of dollars.



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MLK Day Events

Jazz, Spirituals, and Civil Rights
Sunday | Jan. 12 | 2pm |
YDL-Whittaker

MLK Day Celebration
Monday | Jan. 20 | 12pm |
YDL-Superior

Service Project
Monday | Jan. 20 | 2-4pm
YDL-Michigan

FEATURED EVENT

**WINTER BREAK
BOREDOM BUSTERS**

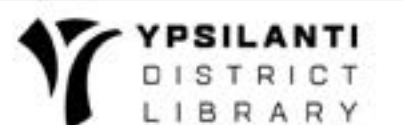
Schedule below

Need to get out of the house? Join us at the library for some fun and games!

YDL-Michigan (if reopened)
Dec. 23, 26, 27 & 30 | Jan. 2 & 3
2pm

YDL-Superior
Dec. 23, 26 & 30 | Jan. 2
3pm

YDL-Whittaker
Dec. 27 & 28 | Jan. 3 & 4
12pm



Turn to the Groundcover News archives for your holiday meal planning needs

I feel the need to present past recipes that delight the palate for all walks of life. Food is one thing that brings people together and I for one love a good satisfying meal. This holiday we are branching out to bring a new idea for all to enjoy — a small booklet to say come share in the holiday delights of Groundcover News.



CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

December 2018: Curried Coconut Butternut Squash Soup



Ingredients:

2 medium butternut squashes, cut length-wise into halves and seeds removed
4 teaspoons olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
Pinch of black pepper
1 cup diced carrots
1 cup diced celery
1 teaspoon curry powder
6 gloves minced garlic
1 small onion, diced
4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
13 fluid ounces coconut milk
2 tablespoons fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped

Preheat oven to 400F degrees. Place rack in the middle of oven.

Place the butternut halves cut-side up on a baking sheet lined with foil. Rub two teaspoons of the oil on the squash. Sprinkle the squash with the salt and pepper. Roast until tender, 50-60 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool for 10

minutes, use a spoon to scoop out the flesh (about four cups) and set aside.

Heat the remaining two teaspoons of oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the carrots, celery, curry powder, garlic and onions. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent and the carrots are fork-tender (about five -10 minutes). Add the squash, coconut milk and broth to the saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer for seven minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes.

Doing a small batch at a time, puree the soup in a blender or food processor until smooth. Add dash of salt to taste. Serve warm, garnished with a little chopped parsley.

Creamy and delicious soup, prepared dairy-free with coconut milk. So very delicious on a cool night! *By Elizabeth Bauman.*

November 2014: Mama's Stroganoff



Ingredients:

2 tsp oil (more if necessary)
1 lb stewing beef
1 large or 2 small onions, chopped
4 fresh tomatoes, peeled and chopped, or 14 oz can of diced tomatoes
¼ cup flour
1 ½ tsp salt
1 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
¼ tsp black pepper
1 cup fresh small mushrooms, chopped
1 cup sour cream
1 package egg noodles

Heat the oil in a deep skillet or any wide-bottom pan. Add the stewing beef and brown on all sides. Remove the beef and add the onions. Cook until soft.

Return beef to pan and add flour to coat. Add tomatoes, salt, pepper and Worcestershire sauce. Cook until tender (2-3 hours for maximum taste, but can be cut in half). Add mushrooms and cook for another 10-15 minutes. While mushrooms are cooking, prepare egg noodles according to package directions. Add sour cream to beef and heat gently until cooked through. DO NOT BOIL! (Sour cream will curdle).

Ladle stroganoff over noodles and enjoy! *By Lisa Sonnenburg.*

November 1, 2022: Kale apple salad

Ingredients:

2/3 cup pecans or walnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped
8 ounces kale
4 medium radishes, thinly sliced
2/3 cup dried cranberries (or dried cherries)
1 medium Granny Smith apple
2 ounces soft goat cheese, chilled
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 1/2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 tablespoon smooth Dijon mustard

1 1/2 teaspoons maple syrup
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Toast nuts in a preheated 350F degree oven for seven to 10 minutes. Pull kale leaves off the tough stems and discard the stems. Chop the kale into small, bite-sized pieces. Place kale in large bowl and sprinkle a small pinch of sea salt over it. Massage the leaves with your hands by lightly scrunching big handfuls at a time, until the leaves are darker in color and fragrant. Add radishes, pecans and cranberries to the bowl. Chop the apple into small, bite-sized pieces and add it to the bowl as well. Crumble the goat cheese over the top. In a small bowl, whisk the remaining ingredients together and pour the dressing over the salad. Toss until evenly coated. Let the salad marinate in the dressing for 10 to 20 minutes. *By Elizabeth Bauman.*

December 2021: Apricot chicken



Ingredients:

1 8-oz. bottle Catalina dressing
1 envelope dry onion soup mix
1 12-oz. jar apricot jam
8 skinless, boneless chicken breasts

Mix the first three ingredients and blend well. Arrange the chicken in a shallow pan and pour all but one cup of the mixture over the top (make sure to cover all the chicken). Cover with a loose layer of aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes, basting occasionally. Uncover and add the last cup of mixture. Remove cover and continue baking for 15 more minutes. Serve with wild or cilantro-lime rice. *By Elizabeth Bauman.*

December 15, 2023: Date pudding



Pudding ingredients:

1 cup brown sugar
1 cup flour
1 Tsp butter
½ cup milk
1 tsp baking soda
1 ½ cups pitted dates
½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
Syrup ingredients:
1 cup brown sugar
1 ½ cup boiling water
1 Tbsp butter
1 Tbsp vanilla

Preheat oven to 350F degrees. Mix together all pudding ingredients except nutmeats and put into a buttered baking dish. Sprinkle nuts over the top. Mix syrup ingredients together. Pour the syrup over the batter and bake for 30 min. Serve with whipped cream. Raisins may be used instead of dates. *By Ken Parks.*

December 2015: Ethel's sugar cookies



Mix thoroughly:

¾ cup shortening (I use a combination of shortening and soft butter)
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
½ tsp vanilla
Mix together and stir in:
2 ½ cup flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt

Chill for one hour. Preheat oven to 400F degrees. Roll dough out on floured surface (to about ¼ to ½ inch thick). Cut into desired shapes. Place on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake for 6-8 minutes. Remove from baking sheet and allow to cool. Excellent with a frosting made with powdered sugar and milk. *By Elizabeth Bauman.*

December 2016: Lemon bars



Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup butter, softened
¼ cup powdered sugar
2 eggs
1 cup granulated sugar
2 teaspoons grated lemon peel
2 tablespoons lemon juice
½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt

Preheat the oven to 350F degrees. Mix flour, butter and powdered sugar.

Press in an ungreased square pan (8x8x2in or 9x9x2in), building up ½ inch edges. Bake for 20 minutes. Beat remaining ingredients

until fluffy, about three minutes.

Pour over hot crust and bake for another 20 minutes (until no indentation remains when touched lightly in the center). Cool. Cut in 1 ¼ inch squares.

Sift light layer of powdered sugar over cooled bars.

A favorite baked every year for our annual cookie exchange by my longtime friend, Lisa. One of my husband's all time favorite holiday cookies. *By Elizabeth Bauman.*

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Go to the Magi

AMANDA GALE
Groundcover vendor No. 573

Herod was “the King of the Jews” according to the Senate of the Roman Empire; well, at least he was Governor of Judea. The Senate and Citizenry did refer to herod, with that title that he SURELY revelled in. So when a delegation of oddly-dressed foreigners, who had travelled MANY WEARY MILES either afoot or via a transporting animal caravan, or maybe even via ship — suddenly arrived one day inquiring, “**Where is HE WHO is born, KING OF THE JEWS?**” that was perceived as an IMMINENT, IMMEDIATE THREAT to the Kingdom of Herod.

herod wasn’t even fully Hebrew — and he was even from the line of Esau/ Edomites — who through the years, generation after generation just kept turning away from GOD; and also making it difficult to say the least — for actual SEEKERS of GOD and HIS Covenants. Thus also herod’s claim to power was EXPOSED as WEAK compared to One “*born*” — *i.e. via full Hebrew lineage* as “KING OF THE JEWS.”

Besides that, herod’s Kingdom was all about Rome and this world’s system. It was STEEPED in “SEEK TO FEEL GOOD and HAVE WHAT You WANT” — by EXCLUSIVELY human INVENTION and SYSTEM — that was neither informed by GOD, nor CARED about HIM. Nor did that system SEEK GOD’S indications for human to human relationships, either. It was all glorying of self and humanity. Herod GLOATED over “the Temple” he had created — supposedly for a place for the Hebrew people with whom he was aligning and designated as having authority over — for worship of GOD. It was widely regarded as a magnificent structure, mystical enough to all the Gentiles whose repentance would NEVER be ACCEPTED for entry into the more inner regions within it by the religious leaders dominating through it — though there was obvious GREAT curiosity AMONGST the Gentiles, about what EXACTLY “the Temple” was, and ESPECIALLY about who the GOD it supposedly represented for — was like. However, the religious “leaders” there — presented a COMPLETELY EXCLUDING representation towards “the Gentiles,” INSTEAD OF the “LIGHT FOR THE GENTILES” that they were supposed to be WITNESSING about.

Also, the supposed “Temple for the Hebrew GOD” had also ultimately devolved basically into functioning as a banking system that made alliance and protection between Hebrew people and the State of Rome. (No

wonder adult-JESUS vehemently threw out the cashiers and the HELPLESS animals ENSLAVED to that system.) This was a shrewd maneuver from the religious elite; however, GOD always recognizes “the Lowly” as being closest in fellowship with HIS Heart, than those pursuing a “new” Babel. However, the money-lust wasn’t the only reason Rome and the Hebrew people dispersed to there were actually ENJOYING a GREAT ALLIANCE and PEACEFUL relationship that also included wide religious and cultural toleration for the Hebrew people.

The Romans “now and then” since at least the last century of the BC era were dealing with Hasmonian Rebellions — starting with Mattathias Hasmon, just one of MANY by first century AD, and MANY afterwards also — including descendants of Hasmon who were self-proclaimed, military-styled supposed “Messiah’s” i.e. “Zionists” SEEKING the overthrow of Rome, and a self-devised, ethnically “purged” Hebrew Nation-State — CONTRARY to the focus and way that THE GOD OF THE HEBREWS had actually instructed.

And Rome liked to “simplify” things, prevent “MESSY” situations and “BAD press” as it were — by such things as RIOTS; Rome also FEARED that TOO MUCH of such as RIOTS perhaps could even ultimately lead to an overthrow, an UNDOING OF Rome. “The Empire” and its emperor were viewed as “the Great Protector” from which all GOOD things for LIFE proceeded. Because of this valid fear of “the Zionists” by Rome because of ALL the CHAOS at very least that their RIOTINGS caused for Rome, it was therefore actually to Rome’s advantage to cater somewhat to the dispersed Hebrew people’s leaders — financially and politically.

However, if these IMPURITIES of heart weren’t enough to link Rome and Judea, herod had also even built a Temple, directly to Caesar and Hebrew people were making “sacrifices” there for the Roman Emperor, and without the emperor even realizing that the original, actual Hebrew religious tradition intended sacrifices as an expression of contrition and a humble, prayerful SEEKING of FORGIVENESS from Sin from GOD. The “sacrifices” thus being made for the Roman Emperor, were thus much more akin with the pagan “appease the gods” type of sacrifices. (No wonder GOD Says, “I desire mercy, and not a sacrifice.”)

So when the delegation of these surely oddly-dressed foreigners — the Magi — arrived, SURELY herod was

thinking, “WHAT!? DON’T these people KNOW!? HAVEN’T they Heard!? I AM THE GREAT HEROD, KING OF JUDEA, THE ONLY KING OF THE JEWS! HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE!? THE WHOLE EMPIRE KNOWS THAT I AM.”

So these people, the Magi — would’ve SEEMED REALLY other-worldly. Indeed, their style, approach, the INFO they did and didn’t have; EVERYTHING about them, was just REALLY “other-worldly” seeming. And herod “and all Jerusalem with him” — were “AFRAID!”

There seems to be some historical suggestion that the Magi were even, “Parthians;” this group of people were intermittently warring with Rome, and most frequently it was the Parthians who were victorious over Rome in these ongoing battles. If so, the Magi would’ve also then been from an “enemy” people. Besides that, any idea that GOD would “go to” a “foreign” people instead of those descended from those written about and through in Moses and the Hebrew prophets and poets — seemed UTTERLY BLASPHEMOUS!

Surely the Magi — along with most of the “Gentile” world by that time were WELL-AWARE of the prophecies of Daniel. The GREAT Curiosity that Gentiles had about the Hebrew GOD and Faith, had even resulted in the commissioning of the Hebrew Scriptures into common language for the Gentiles — and it was referred to as “the Septuagint.”

The first Emperor of Rome had declared himself, “Prinkeps” — first Citizen of Rome; though he went beyond this to also be referred to overtly and hintingly as EXACTLY, “THE MESSIAH.” The political peace that was ushered in via Augustus after 100 years of civil war, was GREATLY APPRECIATED by “the People,” and that and the financial prosperity that many were ENJOYING via Rome was DESIRED TO NOT BE DISRUPTED by ANYTHING or ANYONE! Rome offered convenient and fast travel via its roads, and had “public” baths, and eventually even fast-food outlets and CRUEL “entertainment.” There was even a form of social service aid via “the Corn Dole” — that every financially poor Roman male citizen was bestowed, gratis. What more could people WANT or NEED? And who were these “crazy” Magi — divining from the Stars — information about a newborn “**KING OF THE JEWS?**” Why did GOD go to/through the Magi? A people outside of the Hebrews he’d started with; and a faith that could even seem as if at odds with — the traditional Hebrew Faith.

The answer is simple. Many of the people in the people-group GOD was making a beginning with, had



STOPPED listening to HIM — QUITE COMPLETELY! Whatever it was that was being SOUGHT — it WASN’T a relationship With GOD; and people relationships that HE gives and makes POSSIBLE. SO GOD HIMSELF went to and through — these “outsiders.” They are people who are available for GOD and we need to be available for them. However, all through HIS WORD, it’s ALWAYS “the outsiders” whose hearts REALLY are SEEKING HIM or are at least ready to receive HIM when HE reveals HIMSELF to them, and thus whom HE “goes to and through” anyway. The writer of the New Testament Book of Hebrews thus invites us (Hebrews 13:13) to join JESUS, “outside the (i.e. mainstream)” i.e. the “ACCEPTED APPROVED” mere religion that occurs supposedly in HIS Name.

This is WHY we ourselves NEED to “Go to the Magi.” They will lead us AWAY from fallen-human devisings — right to JESUS, the GOD-Man, instead. They will lead us to something better than for our lives to exist in the EMP-TINESS of supposed constant gain, hierarchies, prestige or using people. They will lead us to RECEIVING the FREE GIFT of GOD’S Grace — AND thus to relate with HIM and each other, in TRUE PEACE and HARMONY. They will lead us to the Promise of MESSIAH’S RESTORATIVE (Cf Acts) return, when also animals and THE WHOLE Creation (Cf Romans 8) are finally FOREVER FREED from the effects of SUFFERINGS that resulted from our spiritual fallenness.

But if we already thought the Magi were “weird” with their appearance, clothes and just showing up in a foreign court asking an uncouth and even ENDANGERING for themselves and others question — as we WATCH them once they find JESUS — it gets even, “WEIRDER!”

This is what the Greek words used in the New Testament account, literally indicate.

The Magi arrived at JESUS and HIS earthly family’s house. At the moment they observe HIM, they “fall down,”

Sudoku

★★☆☆☆ 4puz.com

		9	3		5	1		
	6						7	
5			7		6			4
8		6	2		4	7		9
				7				
1		7	6		9	4		3
4			8		1			7
	5						2	
		3	5		2	8		

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

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The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

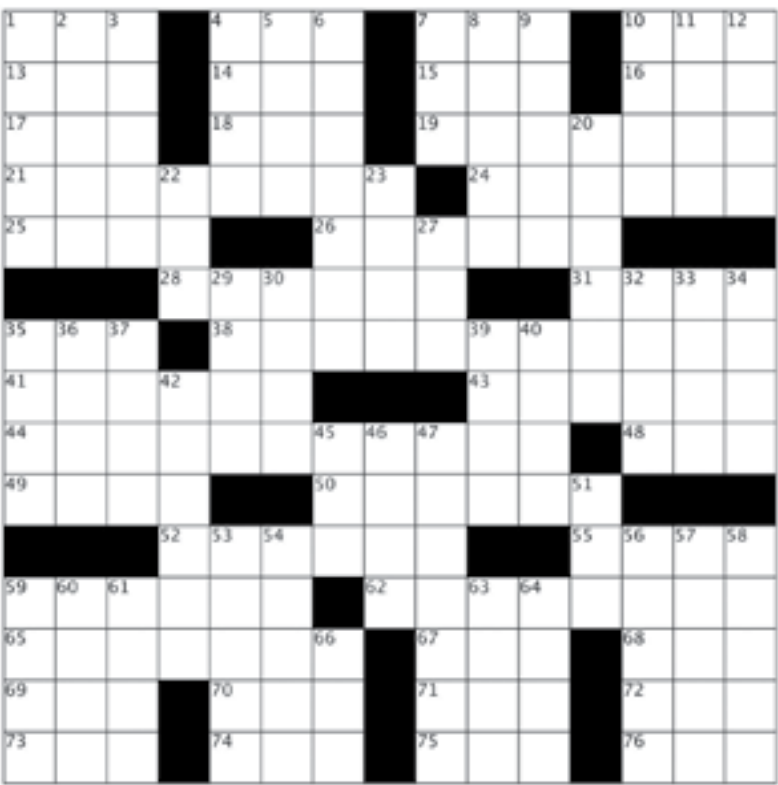
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COMMERCIAL BREAKS

Victor Schmitt



ACROSS

1. Young scout
4. Org. founded during Roosevelt's tenure
7. Nincompoop
10. Kind of farm
13. What 0! or 0^0 equals
14. Lead-in to many carriers
15. Hirsute Addams family member
16. Character who took the red pill
17. Word with bang or bank
18. Trawler trailer
19. *Catcalls?
21. *Handout at some sporting events
24. Timeline items
25. Frank whose diary letters are addressed to "Kitty"
26. Like some names
28. Conducting, as war
31. Spanish appetizer
35. Singer DiFranco
38. *Hold auditions, maybe
41. Real stud
43. Less tame
44. *Game with drawings
48. Mess
49. Sound made with ones finger and palm
50. Minted, as a new term
52. Altoid alternative
55. What you might hear straight from the horse's mouth?
59. Take on
62. *Abusive sort
65. Button appearing at the start of some YouTube videos ... or a hint to this puzzle's starred clues
67. Crypto org.
68. Bygone portable device
69. Next of ____
70. Old Navy rival
71. Video game lead-in to City
72. Dawdle
73. Text letters
74. Unit in a history textbook, maybe
75. Precognition, for short
76. Pronoun in rebus puzzles

DOWN

1. Hooded snake
2. The largest one is the National Education Association
3. Kicked off
4. Buffs
5. Keto or paleo
6. Goddess namesake for a N.A.S.A. program
7. Goal
8. 'Trusty' transport
9. Ward (off)
10. Common pen name
11. Young salamander
12. Throw out
20. Part of an H.M.O.
22. Morning moisture
23. Series of diatribes
27. Tennis' Swiatek
29. Lenovo rival
30. Attire
32. Does some calculating
33. Homer, for one
34. Gone ____
35. Peaks featured in the Evian logo
36. High ____ (showdown time)
37. Caitlin Clark's alma mater
39. Word with song or dive
40. Word yelled upon hearing a surprise party's guest of honor approaching
42. Didn't dawdle
45. Play division
46. Display a spinning circle, as a computer
47. Prerogative
51. ____ Equis
53. PR agent's concern
54. Tennessee's tree
56. Creation of Jobs?
57. Calendar app tab
58. Mount, as a coup
59. Doesn't 59-Across
60. Hardly pore over
61. Transgressions
63. eBay Condition
64. Like an musty basement
66. Belgian town home to one of 7 racetracks in the inaugural Formula 1 season

All inspirational stories about overcoming great adversities are not the same

As creatures blessed with the gift of free will, we human beings are endowed with limitless potential that can take us to places only limited by our imagination. Right? I mean the countless examples of achieving the impossible through perseverance and determination we can draw from for inspiration leaves us with that implied possibility. Stories both modern and timeless, personally witnessed and renowned worldwide, affirm that anything is possible. The tale of a servant boy becoming the ruler of a kingdom; the stories about King Arthur; the historical account of Spartacus bringing his fellow enslaved together to rise against their Roman masters; and many others.

Now there can be some benefit found in having such positivity for inspiration. That is the intention of these examples and stories, but at the end of the day they are simply that — examples and stories, perhaps well-intended, then again, perhaps not, and they're just another manipulation to keep you duly laboring for an implied payoff that turns out to be at odds with reality. So I believe one must be careful to recognize these stories for what they are. They are indeed a tool to motivate you to aspire to a better life — but that's it. They're not manuals for success in life and unless one likes getting their hopes up, don't expect some miraculous blessing to follow you just



JAMES MANNING
Groundcover vendor No. 16

because you persevere through life. More often than not, a story, or movie that ends happily raises an ongoing challenge that works against your goals whatever they may be.

I'm not trying to depress or discourage anyone or paint this world as some unforgiving hellscape. I'm just trying to underline my thought that it's important to be realistic. There are stories and examples of beating the odds out there that are true. But know that it's rare, very rare, and usually the combination with several advantages that are never mentioned, likely advantages a person may not have — like connections, good influential connections, that would vastly improve anyone's situation. So keep that in mind. By all means be inspired, be positive and persevere. But do so with the knowledge that life is not a run-on series of happy endings. Otherwise you're only setting yourself up for

disappointment.

People's views and ideologies are molded by life experiences and no matter how hard we try, words will never be enough to convey the factors that brought me to such a level of pessimism. I trust nothing, and regard everything we're told as fabrications and manipulations to maintain a status quo that has anything but good intentions for society's best interest. I've been lied to and exploited a lot — I mean a lot. Going all the way back to my earliest memories being referred to as "an accident" to today where I have been pleading for help from an indifferent society that makes more money available to people who actually are evil. We have more compassion towards dangerous murderers than I hope to ever get, and yes that is exactly what it sounds like. I have found myself in such a state of frustration and helplessness that I envy people sitting on death row. But there are some getting help and they are not the people like myself screaming for it

over and over for years and years.

So when I'm told not to give up and stay positive, I feel insulted and offended. Therefore, I'm wary of everything. People think all financially challenged and homeless people are liars getting what they deserve while television evangelists and politicians are the saints they claim to be. And given my experiences, that level of brainwashing strikes me as evil should there ever be an example of it. But I'm straying a bit off topic and wanted to just circle back to the point I want to make. That blindly believing everything you're told will never line up with reality.

It's important to approach everything with a certain level of skepticism and or wariness. See things for what they are and take whatever inspiration is useful from the success stories, but be realistic. You don't have to write everything off and be suspicious of everything around you. Yet it doesn't hurt to have a questioning nature — at the very least it might spare you the negative experience of being exploited.



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3	6	4	9	1	8	2	7	5
5	8	1	7	2	6	3	9	4
8	3	6	2	5	4	7	1	9
9	4	5	1	7	3	6	8	2
1	2	7	6	8	9	4	5	3
4	9	2	8	6	1	5	3	7
6	5	8	4	3	7	9	2	1
7	1	3	5	9	2	8	4	6

CUB	FDA	ASS	ANT
ONE	AIR	ITT	NEO
BIG	NET	MEADOWS	
ROAD	STER	EVENTS	
ANNE	MAIDEN		
	WAGING	TAPA	
ANI	CASTA	SHADOW	
LOOKER		WILDER	
POWER	BALLAD	STY	
SNAP	COINED		
	TICTAC	OATS	
ASSUME	DEADSPOT		
SKIP	PADS	NSA	PDA
KIN	GAP	SIM	LAG
SMS	ERA	ESP	EYE



➤ MAGI from page 8

"fall on their faces" before HIM. There are two Greek words used for this; one of these words can even mean, "as under condemnation," and the other word can even mean, "to collapse" or "to die." Both of these words are used of the Magi's response to JESUS. Each of these words includes the idea of being like in awe and/or bestowing GREAT Honor to a DESERVING, "HIGHER UP." It's like they just "came UNDONE" in HIS presence. Was this not a premonition of HIS, SUBSTITUTIONAL, ATONING SUFFERINGS and DEATH? And in the sudden, spiritual OVERCOMING they EXPERIENCED were they not dying to themselves and believing-on THE TRUE ONE WHOM they'd come SO FAR SEARCHING FOR?

The HOLY SCRIPTURE also indicates they "saw" HIM; more like seeing with "the mind's eye" — not just visually looking. It's like they could sense a spiritual perceiving of themselves — even from this Child, or at least in HIS presence. Then the Magi "worshiped," a basic, most literal meaning is "to KISS." Did they kiss the ground in reverence, as they were bowed before HIM? Or did they KISS HIS CUTE, CHUBBY, little boy face? They had been SEEKING HIM for about TWO WHOLE YEARS!

Then they gave HIM — to this peasant little boy — some UNUSUAL GIFTS!

They didn't give him any play toy nor clothes. They gave HIM a financially VALUABLE gift; and TWO RARE and VALUABLE spices/fragrances. Perhaps the gifts reflected something of the livelihood of the givers? They SURELY GAVE their BEST of what they had to give. **They WANTED to GIVE the BEST of what they had — to JESUS!**

Can you imagine such a spectacle — in modern day!? Strange foreigners showing up at a poor family's humble dwelling, having a PURE though DEEP spiritual encounter with the Child of the family, and giving HIM COSTLY GIFTS!? And, the family ACCEPTED FOR ALL THAT to and WITH their Child!?

Possibly what they gave would provide for JESUS' whole family, during TOUGH financial times? They had had to make a trip to Egypt previously and Joseph perhaps was an older-man and VERY probably died before JESUS reached adulthood. The word used for "gold" could denote VALUABLE coins. The fragrances they gave suggested about JESUS royalty and HIS SUFFERINGS and DEATH. Frankincense is sweet when burned and suggests HOLINESS and RIGHTEOUSNESS; myrrh is also sweet when CRUSHED and burned, and the CRUSHING definitely connotes SUFFERINGS.

These people were "on a mission." They seem to have REALLY WANTED TO MEET JESUS, personally. It would seem like they also really believed they REALLY HAD TO get these gifts to JESUS; like they had to TESTIFY of HIM and like that GOD had called them to the privilege of PROVIDING for HIS NEEDS.

But the coward, "herod — the Great" once again used his mere human means SEEKING to THWART what was the ACTUAL plan of GOD. This time however, the TRAGEDY was to all the male infants of the WHOLE AREA Of JUDEA, from TWO years OF AGE AND LESS — for they were ordered BRUTALLY KILLED via herod's soldiers (perhaps typically via sword!?) This hearkens to the Hebrew children of Moses' time, and satan ALWAYS does things in SICK, repeating patterns. This MERCILESS SLAUGHTER of these INNOCENT children was also prophesied as "Rachel weeping for her children."

There are 40+ other overt prophecies in Moses and the Canonical Hebrew poets and prophets that are QUITE OBSERVABLE as being parallel with the person of JESUS and events and aspects concerning HIM; and hundreds more prophecies in these same books that are perhaps slightly more obscure, though RECOGNIZABLE if one "goes a little deeper." The religious leaders were QUITE familiar with these prophecies (Cf Matt). However, ASTONISHINGLY — they SHUNNED these, even arguably aided with trying to THWART these, while the Magi followed a star, and found — THE SAVIOR!

Was the star a direct, in-person manifestation of THE HOLY SPIRIT? It was at least something brought about by THE HOLY SPIRIT — testifying of JESUS, and which testimony the Magi followed. GOD ALWAYS reaches-out to us in ways PERSONAL and UNDERSTANDABLE to EACH person who ACTUALLY WANTS HIM! **HE gives us what we NEED to find and relate with — HIM! HE uses the means we can RECOGNIZE and NEED.**

However, the star as glorious as it was — was just "a Pointer" — to JESUS.

A few years later in history, it will be EXACTLY HIS RIGHTFUL TITLE that will be the ironically TRUE accusation that is posted over HIS Cross. **"THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS."** It is also prophesied, "HE will come to HIS Temple;" and this HE fulfilled in HIS first Advent and will yet fulfill in HIS second coming.

Therefore, we NEED to "Go to the Magi." We NEED their faith; they obviously TRUSTED GOD instead of FEARING herod and others. They walked right into a foreign, perhaps "enemy" court. They SURELY had to TRUST GOD over that LONG, two year

journey. Were they all from one country? Or did GOD gather them together with each other, along the way? Were there two or 23, or more of them? We NEED their kind of people in our LIVES — courageous and DETERMINED with GOD'S leadings. We NEED to associate with the humble, TRUE-hearted worshipers of JESUS, NOT with the elite religious paralysis, QUENCHING THE HOLY SPIRIT.

We NEED their mission and their insight. **We are called to VALUE and AID and to ASSUME WHOLENESS and GOOD about, "The Least Of These ..." among us.** That was UNHEARD of by Rome. We are called to BLESS and PRAY for our enemies — though not to ANY MASOCHISTIC SEEKING of their ABUSINGS of us; this WASN'T even FULLY realized by Moses and the Hebrew prophets and poets.

We NEED to REALIZE with the Magi — that JESUS can be perceived as a THREAT, because HE is the only true complete revolutionary who upends, UNDOES, and thus UPSETS — the ways of this world. **JESUS changes LIVES and HEARTS. JESUS heals INFIRMITIES and RELATIONSHIPS. JESUS gives us PURPOSE and ULTIMATE GOOD DESTINATION. The SPIRIT OF JESUS spreads around GOD'S MERCIES — in the "Here and Now."**

HOW will we LIVE our lives if we REALLY believe this? What are we SEEKING to give to JESUS, and others?

We NEED to "Go to the Magi" to learn to RID ourselves of all the DISTRACTIONS of this LIFE and to LOVE and to WORSHIP JESUS and RECEIVE HIS HEALING LOVE for us. We NEED HIS LOVE mutually with each other to RELATE with people and LOVE as HE EMPOWERS us to.

Have you heard this song?

"How Many Kings?" by Downhere

Follow the star to a place unexpected
Would you believe, after all we've projected
A child in a manger?
Lowly and small, the weakest of all
Unlikeliest hero, wrapped in his mother's shawl
Just a child
Is this who we've waited for?

Bringing our gifts for the newborn Savior
All that we have, whether costly or meek
Because we believe
Gold for his honor, and frankincense for his pleasure
And myrrh for the cross He will suffer
Do you believe?
Is this who we've waited for?

'Cause How many kings step down from their thrones?
How many lords have abandoned their homes?
How many greats have become the least for me?
And how many gods have poured out their hearts
To romance a world that is torn all apart?
How many fathers gave up their sons for me?
Only one did that for me

Oh, all for me, oh
All for me, all for you

Only one did that for me

All for me, all for you

MERRY CHRISTmas! Please see accompanying illustration on page 12.

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Christmas Eve Worship: 12/24 at 7:00 pm
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www.bethlehem-ucc.org
for the most up-to-date calendar and event information.


Sunday Worship Time
10:00 am In-person
and via Live Stream

Candied sweet potatoes

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

6 medium sweet potatoes
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup unsalted butter
1 Tablespoon water
1/4 cup pure maple syrup
1 cup (200g) packed light or dark brown sugar
3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
2 teaspoons orange zest
flaky sea salt (optional)



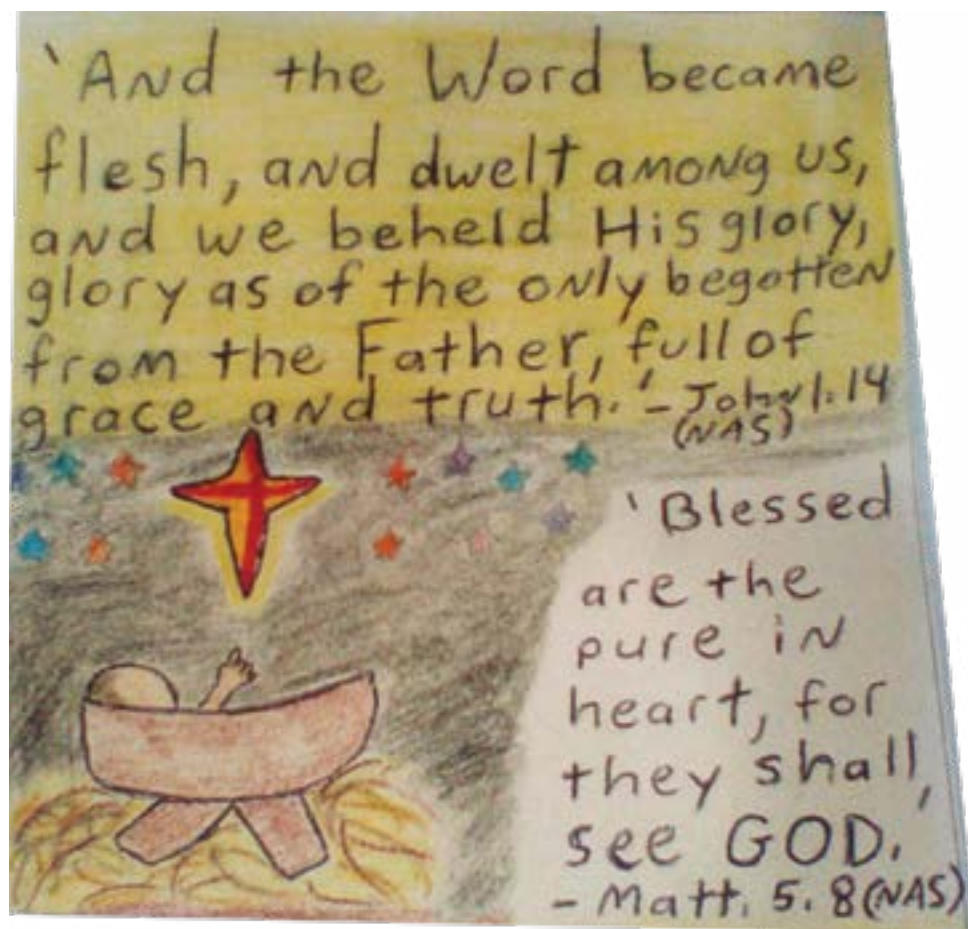
Remove sauce from heat and stir in the vanilla extract and orange zest. Pour sauce over potatoes and toss to coat. Bake for 1 hour, stopping and stirring the sweet potatoes every 20 minutes. After the first 20 minutes, cover the dish with aluminum foil so the potatoes bake evenly. Remove from the oven, sprinkle with sea salt if desired and cool uncovered for 10 minutes before serving. The sauce is thin right out of the oven but thickens as it cools.

Delicious as a holiday side dish to turkey.

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Peel then slice the sweet potatoes into 1/2 inch thick slices. Place in a greased 9x13-inch dish and sprinkle salt on top and toss to coat.

Combine the butter, water, maple syrup, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg into a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook and stir until the butter has melted. Stop stirring and bring to a gentle boil. Boil for two minutes without stirring.



By Amanda Gale, vendor No. 573



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